From his sincere friend
the author

APOSTOLIC PREACHING

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SERMON I.

1 COR. i. 21.

"FOR AFTER THAT IN THE WISDOM OF GOD, THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD, IT PLEASED GOD BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING TO SAVE THEM THAT BELIEVE."

THE beſt method, in my judgment, of determining with accuracy, how far the light of nature is ſufficient to lead mankind to the knowledge of the true GOD and their duty to him, is, to attend to the condition of the Heathen world: Not of the moſt barbarous and ignorant, but of the inhabitants of Greece and Rome at the periods when they were moſt celebrated for learning and refinement. Even then they were groſs idolators; and many of their ſentiments and practices were ſhocking

to decency and common ſenſe. † Whence it appears, that with all their wiſdom and learning, they quite miſtook the nature of God and religion: hence divine revelation became abſolutely neceſſary. "For after that in the wiſdom of God the world by wiſdom knew not God"— The meaning is, That altho' the inviſible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly

† The ſports of the gladiators, unnatural luſts, the licentiouſneſs of divorce, the expoſing of infants and ſlaves, the procuring abortions, the public eſtabliſhment of ſtews; all ſubſiſted at Rome, and not one of them was condemned, or hinted at in Tully's offices.— The moſt indecent revelling, drunkenneſs, and lewdneſs were practiſed at the feaſts of Bacchus, Ceres, and Cybele; and their greateſt philoſophers never remonſtrated againſt it.

"The Heathen philoſophers, though they have advanced fine ſayings and ſublime precepts, in ſome points of morality, have groſsly failed in others: ſuch as the toleration or encouragement of revenge, ſlavery, unnatural luſt, fornication, ſuicide, &c.—For example: *Plato* expreſly allowed of exceſſive drinking at the feſtivals of Bacchus,—*Maximus Tyrius* forbad to pray, &c.

"*Ariſtotle*

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clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head, the world knew him not; but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened. Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things." [Rom. i. 20—23.]

"*Ariſtotle* and *Plato* both direct that means ſhould be uſed to prevent weak children being brought up.—*Cato* commends a young man for frequenting the ſtews.—*Cicero* expreſsly ſpeaks of fornication as a thing never found fault with.—*Plato* recommends a community of women, and adviſes that ſoldiers ſhould not be reſtrained from ſenſual indulgence, even the moſt unnatural ſpecies of it.—*Xenophon* relates, without any marks of reprobation, that natural luſt was encouraged by the laws of ſeveral Grecian ſtates.—*Solon*, their great law giver forbad it only to ſlaves.—*Diogenes* inculcated, and openly practiſed the moſt brutal luſt.—*Zeno* and *Cato* both killed themſelves."

[Biſhop of CARLISLE's reflections on the life and character of Chriſt,—Appendix.]

It has been the method of the infinite God, both before and ſince the fall, to leave mankind to act out their own characters, and not to interpoſe until the neceſſity of his interpoſition became evident. Thus it was in the caſe of our firſt parents: he could have prevented their apoſtacy, but did not. After they had ſinned, and were diſtreſſed with conſcious guilt, he revealed to them Jeſus Chriſt under the idea of the ſeed of the woman. And when the world was overſpread with ſin and ignorance, and by wiſdom knew him not, having had the faireſt trial, he was pleaſed, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe. Let us

I. Account for Paul's uſe of this expreſſion, *the fooliſhneſs of preaching.*

II. Ascertain what kind of preaching he had in view.

III. Prove that God hath been pleaſed to put the moſt diſtinguiſhed honor on it, by making it the means of *ſaving them that believe.*

I. Our firſt inquiry is, Why does the Apoſtle uſe the expreſſion, *fooliſhneſs of preaching?*

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We are confident, my brethren, he does not ſpeak in his *own*, but in *borrowed* language. He muſt have been a fool indeed, to have engaged in a ſervice which he knew would reproach his own underſtanding. Rather he has reſpect to the common opinion of the Greeks, who are ſaid to *ſeek after wiſdom*; meaning the wiſdom of this world. "We preach Chriſt crucified, ſays this apoſtle, to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God." [Verſes 23, 24.]——This ſingle paſſage accounts for Paul's uſe of the expreſſion. The preaching of Chriſt crucified was fooliſhneſs to the learned and unregenerate Greeks.

II. We paſs to conſider what kind of preaching it was, the apoſtle had reſpect to.

There are certain ſentiments that the world can hear with patience and approbation: there are others to which the hearts of natural men riſe in oppoſition.

1. Few-

1. Few, if any, object to *moral ſubjects*, becauſe it is a juſt and general opinion, That all men ought to do juſtly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Neither Jews nor Greeks would take offence at this kind of preaching; nor even men of vicious characters; unleſs the preacher ſhould happen to fix on the vices of ſome of his friends, and cenſure them with ſeverity. In that caſe reſentment would naturally be excited, and he might expect to be charged with being too *pointed* or *perſonal* in the pulpit: eſpecially if he had previouſly known on whom the reproof would fall.

In ſuch circumſtances what ſhall a preacher do? Shall he ceaſe to expoſe vice, becauſe ſome of his friends are vicious? God forbid! Far better will it be for him to loſe the attachment of the beſt pariſhioner he has; and to make a ſacrifice of his whole temporal intereſt, than to be unfaithful to his God, to his conſcience and to the people of his charge.—The way for mankind to ſecure their feelings from injury on ſuch occaſions, is for them to be virtuous. But if they will violate the laws of God,

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and injure ſociety by their wicked examples, they muſt bear the reproach.

No *prudent* man will introduce perſonal matters into the pulpit; nor will an *honeſt* man be afraid of commending himſelf to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.—However, as moral ſubjects are generally approved, becauſe agreeable to the reaſon and nature of things, he has but little to fear on this head; except he ſhould be too evangelical in his manner of treating them: for the law may be handled *evangelically*, and the goſpel may be preached *legally*.

2. We may alſo inſiſt freely on the *chriſtian tempers* without giving offence; becauſe, like moral ſubjects, they command reſpect from mankind in general; who readily acknowledge, that all men ought to be meek, patient, charitable, ready to forgive, &c.—And it is confeſſed, that theſe are very important ſubjects, and ſhould frequently be brought into public view, as evidences of the truth of perſonal religion: for, *if any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt he is none of his.* [Rom. viii. 9.]

3. We

3. We may alſo paſs without reproach perhaps, if we *touch lightly* on the ſinfulneſs of mankind; and aſſure them, If they do what they can, God will co-operate with their endeavours, and grant them ſalvation.—Such a repreſentation of things is flattering to the pride of man, becauſe it extenuates human depravity, and divides the glory of ſalvation between Chriſt and the ſinner.—In this caſe the offence of the croſs ceaſeth.

4. It ſeems to be a very popular opinion, "That articles of faith are of no great importance, provided a man's life be good."—If ſo, it follows, that it was not *neceſſary* that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould come into the world to *teach* and *ſave* mankind; becauſe, according to the above propoſition, their ſalvation might have been accompliſhed without it. For whether we believe in Jeſus Chriſt or Confucius is of no conſequence provided the life be good.—It amounts therefore to a rejection of divine revelation, particularly of chriſtianity.

" Some perſons, upon pretence of the ſufficiency of the light of nature, avowedly reject all revelation, as, in its very notion, incredible, and what muſt be fictitious. And indeed it is certain, no revelation would have been given, had the light of nature been ſufficient in ſuch a ſenſe, as to render one not wanting and uſeleſs. But no man, in ſerioufneſs and ſimplicity of mind, can poſſibly think it ſo, who conſiders the ſtate of religion in the heathen world, before revelation, and its preſent ſtate in thoſe places which have borrowed no light from it.

" There are other perſons, not to be ranked with theſe, who ſeem to be getting in a way of neglecting, and, as it were, overlooking revelation, as of ſmall importance, provided natural religion be kept to." With little regard, either to the evidence of the former, or to the objections againſt it, and even upon ſuppoſition of its truth; " The only deſign of it," ſay they, " muſt be to eſtabliſh a belief of the moral " ſyſtem of nature, and to enforce the practice " of natural piety and virtue. The belief and " practice of theſe things were, perhaps, much

"promoted by the first publication of christian-
"ity: But whether they are believed and prac-
"tised, upon the evidence and motives of na-
"ture or of revelation, is no great matter." *
This way of considering revelation, though it is not the same with the former, yet borders nearly upon it, and very much runs up into it: †
—that is, into deism. This I apprehend will appear by comparing the principle we oppose, with our Lord's commission to his apostles, [Mark 16. 15, 16.] "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." To which may be added the following solemn passage of Peter concerning Christ, delivered by him when he was filled with the Holy Ghost—[Acts 4. 12.] "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

If we deny the truth of these scriptures the charge of deism is fixed on us: if we admit it,

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* Aug. in Psa. 31.

† Bishop Butler's analogy. Edit. 5th, p. 171—173.

we can no longer treat chriſtianity with indifference, but muſt confeſs that it is of infinite importance to mankind both in its *principles* and *practiſes*.

To aſcertain what chriſtianity is, as taught by Chriſt and his apoſtles, we muſt ſearch the New Teſtament.

THE *fooliſhneſs of preaching* mentioned in the text, the apoſtle explains by ſaying, *We preach Chriſt crucified.*—[Ver. 23.] This general expreſſion comprehends, I ſuppoſe, the various ſubjects of the miniſtry of the apoſtles; which I proceed to conſider.

MORE cannot reaſonably be expected under this head, than that the preacher ſhould give a *ſketch* of the plan of apoſtolic preaching. A full diſcuſſion of the ſubject would fill volumes; and will employ the whole time of the miniſters of Chriſt, provided they are properly attentive to the duties of their profeſſion.

1ſt. THE

1ſt. The apoſtles inſiſted frequently on the great principles, called, *natural religion* : Such as the being and attributes of God,—his creation and government of the univerſe—his love of virtue and hatred of vice—and that he will finally render to every man according to his works. Theſe principles are fundamental to all true religion ; and are blended with chriſtianity, which "is a republication of them : and which is very material, it teaches natural religion in its genuine ſimplicity ; free from thoſe ſuperſtitions with which it was totally corrupted, and under which it was in a manner loſt.*"

If ſo, natural religion owes much to chriſtianity. Beſides, it comprehends all the great principles of natural religion, and makes us acquainted with the method of our redemption by Chriſt; concerning which the light of nature leaves us in total darkneſs.

Thus viewed chriſtianity may be conſidered as a *new edition* of natural religion, with *additions* of the

* Ibid.

the greateſt importance to the world.——Let mankind determine then, which has the preference: natural religion detached from chriſtianity; or chriſtianity as comprehending all the great principles of natural religion in their moſt pure ſtate; and at the ſame time revealing to us God's eternal purpoſe of mercy to ſinners thro' Jeſus Chriſt.

2dly. The *univerſal corruption of the world* is another part of apoſtolic preaching. In Rom. iii. Paul conſiders this ſubject in a moſt explicit and decided manner, where he takes a comparative view of Jews and Gentiles. "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wiſe: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin." And after he had quoted ſeveral paſſages from the Old Teſtament in ſupport of the affecting truth, he adds, "Now we know that what things the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be ſtopped, and *all the world* may become guilty before God.—For *all have ſinned*, and have come ſhort of the glory of God." [ver. 19—23.] And ſo far as our reading and obſervation

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tion extend, we find the melancholy truth exemplified.

3dly. The ſacred writers aſſure us that all men, conſidered in unbelief, are in a condition of *total depravity*. [Gen. vi. 5.] We read, "And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great on the earth, and that *every imagination* of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually*."—Jeſus Chriſt declares, "For out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies." [Matt. xv. 19.] If ſo, the heart of man is the fountain of iniquity.—In John iii. 6. after Chriſt had ſpoken of the new birth to Nicodemus, he adds, "That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh;" —that is, altogether ſinful. Thus Paul uſes the term *fleſh* repeatedly. [Rom. vii. 5, &c.—] "For they that are after the *fleſh*," that is, influenced by a ſinful nature, "do mind the things of the *fleſh*"—"So then they that are in the *fleſh* cannot pleaſe God;" becauſe the *carnal mind is enmity againſt him*. This ſhort ſentence is remarkably deſcriptive of the total ſinfulneſs of the human heart.

By this depravity inſpired writers do not mean, that there is any loſs of the natural faculties of the ſoul; theſe remain entire amidſt the ruins of the fall: man has reaſon, underſtanding, will and affections; but that he is deſtitute of a ſpiritual taſte, and under the conſtant influence of averſion to God.—If the ſinner's heart was right in a moral ſenſe, I can conceive of no remaining inability to love God for his own ſake, and to live to his glory. The eſſence of religion is love; and the eſſence of depravity or wickedneſs is enmity of heart to God. And in this awful condition the ſinner is, as long as he remains in unregeneracy.

4thly. In connection with this repreſentation of human nature, the apoſtles endeavoured to awaken the attention of their hearers to the *infinite danger* in which they were. Often did they thunder in their ears the terrors of the law; ſaying, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." [Gal. 3. 10.] "If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema maranatha." [1 Cor. 16. 22.]—"When the

Lord

Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe—in that day." [2 Theſſ. i. 7—11.]

We ſee that they conſidered mankind as conſiſting of two claſſes, the righteous and the wicked; and addreſſed them in language adapted to their reſpective characters. They did not preach to a promiſcuous aſſembly as if they were all ſaints; but aſſured the ungodly that they were in the gall of bitterneſs and the bonds of iniquity; and that ſhould they die in that condition, the wrath of God would abide upon them for ever. But if any of the people were pricked in the heart, and cried out, "Men and brethren what ſhall we do?"——

5thly. THEY preached Chriſt to them as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* "For I determined, ſays Paul to the Corinthians, not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified." [1 Cor. ii. 2.] This was their darling theme, and the only remedy for ſin-ſick ſouls.

HAD a ſermon been delivered in the apoſtolic age, to a chriſtian aſſembly, that had but little of Chriſt in it, they would at once have concluded, the preacher had forgot his errand; and with the diſappointed woman at the ſepulchre, have cried out, "They have taken away my Lord out of his place, and I know not where they have laid him." Where ſhould Jeſus Chriſt be as the object of affection, if not in the hearts and converſation of his diſciples?—Where indeed, if not in the preaching of his miniſters?

THE apoſtles preached Chriſt in his TRUE and PROPER DEITY as eſſential to the chriſtian ſcheme. This great truth they had learned from his own mouth. [John x. 31—39.]—

"I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up ſtones to ſtone him. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Many good works have I ſhewed you from my Father; for which of theſe works do ye ſtone me? The Jews anſwered him, ſaying, For a good work we ſtone thee not; but for blaſphemy; and becauſe that thou, being a man, makeſt thyſelf God."—Here was a moſt favorable opportunity for Chriſt to have diſclaimed all pretenſions to the Godhead.—He had only to inform them, that they had miſtaken his meaning; that he laid no claim to divinity; but meant to aſſure them, that he was one with God his Father in *deſign* and *operation*, not in *nature*. —Shocked at the idea of blaſphemy, would he not at once have acquitted himſelf of the charge?—Would not any of his apoſtles, or any good man on earth who had been ſo groſsly miſtaken, have rectified the miſtake as ſoon as poſſible? Our Lord's not doing it, when every circumſtance called for the frank acknowledgment, is in my judgment, no inconſiderable proof that he was a divine perſon.

If we conſider him in no other light than as a teacher ſent from God to inſtruct and to reform mankind, it ſeems to have been his duty to remove the prejudices which the Jews had imbibed againſt him; that ſo he might anſwer the deſign of his miſſion. Inſtead of this, he makes an appeal to his miraculous works, as proof that he was in the Father, and the Father inHim. The Jews ſtill believed, that he made himſelf God; therefore "they ſought to take him; but he eſcaped out of their hands." He left them, my brethren, under the influence of a very important error, provided he was not really GOD. "Nor did our Lord give any intimation, ſays one, that they had miſunderſtood him; nor yet the evangeliſt, as he does in ſeveral other inſtances of much leſs importance; which ſilence is a ſtrong preſumptive proof, that they were not under a miſtake about the ſenſe of the words: for ſuch a miſtake, on the principles of our oppoſers, might have been an occaſion of idolatry in them; and a miſtake of that kind, not remarked by the hiſtorian, would be calculated to anſwer the ſame pernicious purpoſe in ſucceeding generations.—But if he refuſed to correct

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ſo dangerous a miſtake on *their* account, yet was it not neceſſary that he ſhould have done it on *ours?*—that when we read his goſpel, we might not entertain the deteſtable thought, that he equalled himſelf with the Moſt High. If, however, he thought it proper not to explain himſelf, at that time; yet it might have been expected, that his diſciples ſhould have given us the true ſenſe of the myſterious words, when they reported them." *

* Dr. ABBADIE's treatiſe on The DEITY of JESUS CHRIST, &c. p. 246, 247: in which this important ſubject is handled in a moſt maſterly manner; and well merits the attention of both the friends and oppoſers of the doctrine.

SERMON II.

THE language and conduct of the diſciples of Chriſt prove, that they received him as a divine perſon. John tells us [c.v.23.] That it is the will of God, "That all men ſhould honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not theSon, honoreth not the Father who hath ſent him." Compared with Heb. i. 6. "And again when he bringeth in the firſt begotten into the world, he ſaith, And let all the angels of God worſhip him." The beſt comment on ſuch paſſages will probably be found, in the conduct of his immediate followers. If they, who were favored with divine inſpiration, actually worſhipped him, we may ſafely believe that they received him as very and eternal God. This then really was the caſe with

with Stephen. [Acts vii. 59.] "And they ſtoned Stephen calling upon GOD, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit."—Here we ſee a pious martyr in the hour of diſſolution, addreſſing himſelf to Jeſus Chriſt in a ſolemn act of religious worſhip: therefore we conclude Jeſus Chriſt is truly God.

IN 2. Cor. xii. 8, 9. we obſerve that Paul prays to Chriſt when there was given to him a thorn in the fleſh, a meſſenger of ſatan to buffet him: "For this thing, I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs." What follows proves that by the LORD whom he addreſſed, CHRIST is intended. "Moſt gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the *power of Chriſt* may reſt upon me." The Lord had promiſed him that his grace ſhould be ſufficient for him; this grace he calls the *power of Chriſt*; ſignifying, that the LORD CHRIST, to whom he addreſſed himſelf, had given him this gracious anſwer.

THOUGH there are many other texts in the writings of the apoſtles that are of the ſame import,* I ſhall only mention the following plain, deciſive paſſage, [Rev. v. 11—end.] "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beaſts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand; ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honor, and glory, and bleſſing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I ſaying, Bleſſing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, AND UNTO THE LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER."—I appeal to every unprejudiced mind, whether there can poſſibly be a more ſolemn act of *ſupreme* worſhip than this, which is aſcribed equally to the LAMB that was ſlain, as to him that ſitteth upon the throne? And will any man after reading this paſſage, heſitate a moment, whether he ought to pay the higheſt

* John xiv. 1. Rom. x. 12, 13. Rom. xv. xii. 2 Cor. ix. 1. Acts ix. 14, &c.

higheſt honor to the Son of God? who is the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.

WHAT idea would a man of common ſenſe form of the character of Jeſus Chriſt, upon reading Philip. ii. 6. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God?" Would he not naturally think, either that Jeſus Chriſt is a divine perſon; or that he was guilty of the moſt horrid impiety? It would have been a robbery of the moſt blaſphemous kind, for a creature, however exalted, to claim equality with JEHOVAH: and inſtead of his being celebrated for his humility, he ought to be conſidered as a monſter of pride and wickedneſs. But if we admit the idea of his true and proper deity, we are at once led to admire his unparallelled condeſcention. "He who was in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men: And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death

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of the croſs." [ver. 7, 8.] The moment we deny the divinity of Chriſt, I conceive we deſtroy the apoſtle's argument.

"THE following words, as they ſtand in our tranſlation, go on to deſcribe the excellency of his glory, which was ſo real and tranſcendent a glory, *that he thought it not robbery to be*—i. e. he thought himſelf entitled to be—*equal with God.* But I ſhall not inſiſt upon this tranſlation; for it is more agreeable to the apoſtle's argument, and to the language made uſe of, to ſuppoſe him to intend in theſe words, to expreſs the firſt degree or inſtance of his humility, and that the verſe ſhould be rendered by words to this effect: Who being in the form of God, was not fond, or tenacious, of appearing as God; but made himſelf of no reputation. I ſhall not trouble you with the particular reaſons of this rendering, which would lead us too far into critical enquiries: but which way ſoever the text be underſtood, the τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ will be found to belong to Jeſus Chriſt. If he thought it not robbery to aſſume this equality with God, (whatever is meant by it,) undoubtedly he was equal:

or, if it was the effect of his humility, that he did not hold or inſiſt upon his equality with God, then certainly he had ſuch an equality; for where is the humility of not inſiſting on, or not retaining an equality, which never did or could belong to him?" *

It was in the contemplation of this aſtoniſhing truth, that our apoſtle thus exclaims, "And without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh"—[1 Tim. iii. 16.] That it was ſo, is a truth revealed, but the *manner* of it is paſt finding out.

To what hath been ſaid on this ſubject I will only add [Col. ii. 9.] "For in him, i. e. Chriſt, dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." It ſeems that Paul could not ſay more than this to eſtabliſh the deity of his Maſter. What a ſtriking gradation is here—In Chriſt "dwells the GODHEAD"—"the FULNESS *of the Godhead*"—yea,

* Bp. SHERLOCK's diſcourſes on this paſſage. Vol. 4. p. 24, 25.

yea, "ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY."—Then ſurely he is very and eternal God. Let us then, my brethren, amidſt the numerous attempts that are made to rob Chriſt of his eſſential glory, without any ſecret reſerve, or double meaning, aſcribe bleſſing, and honor, and glory, and power to Jeſus Chriſt, our GOD and SAVIOR.

IT would be eaſy to prove by the ſacred ſcriptures, that the ſame divine names, titles, attributes and works are aſcribed to Chriſt, that are aſcribed to the Father; but I hope enough has been ſaid to make it evident, that his true and proper deity was an eſſential part of apoſtolic preaching.

SEVERAL of the paſſages of ſcripture that we have been conſidering, prove alſo, the *incarnation* of the Son of God: or, that the divine and human natures were united in him. For inſtance, "*God* was manifeſt in *the fleſh*."—He that was in the *form of God* was found in *faſhion as a man*. Alſo [Heb. ii. 16.] "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham." The perſon ſpoken of is

Chriſt,

Chriſt, who exiſted prior to his birth of Mary in a nature different from that which he aſſumed. "Verily he took"—here we have a perſonal action: he who was properly divine, "took on him the ſeed, or nature, of Abraham." Thus the WORD was made *fleſh*; i. e. became united to the nature of man.

I PASS to obſerve, That the apoſtles preached Chriſt as the *all atoning ſacrifice for ſin.* Peter declares that "he bare our ſins in his own body on the tree."—This language he borrowed from Iſaiah [liii. 4, 5.] "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our ſorrows; yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for *our* tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for *our* iniquities: the chaſtiſement of *our* peace was upon him; and with *his* ſtripes *we are healed.*"—"He hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us." "He died the juſt *for* the unjuſt that he might bring us to God," &c. Such is the current language of the Bible.

IT is obſervable, that inſpired writers lay the principal ſtreſs on his *death.* Paul ſays, "We have redemption *through his blood*"—that we are redeemed with the *precious blood of Chriſt,*—that he *died for our ſins*; not for his own, for he had none: "He was holy, harmleſs, undefiled and ſeparate from ſinners."

"CHRIST'S ſatisfaction for ſin was not *only* by his laſt ſufferings, though it was *principally* by them; but all his ſufferings, and all the humiliation that he was ſubject to from the firſt moment of his incarnation to his reſurrection, were propitiatory or ſatisfactory." * All that he did and ſuffered make up that righteouſneſs by which the believing ſinner is juſtified. Through the whole he acted voluntarily: for he had power to lay down his life, and he had power to take it again; but he knew that it was neceſſary that he ſhould ſuffer theſe things, and enter into his glory; therefore he became "obedient unto death even the death of the croſs:" not as a martyr only to ſeal the truth of his own reli-,

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* Preſident EDWARD'S Hiſt. Redemp. laſt edi. p. 324.

gion ; but that he might put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf : hence he is ſaid to be "the propitiation for our ſins ;" [Rom. iii. 25.] not *metaphorically* but *really*.

6th. Jesus Christ having finiſhed *his* part of the work of our redemption, aſcended to the Father, and ſent the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe peculiar office it is to take it up where he had left it, and to carry it on until the glorious plan ſhall be all accompliſhed.—"It is expedient for you, ſaid Chriſt to his diſciples, that I go away ; for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment." [John xiv. 7, 8.]

The work of Jeſus Chriſt is *for*, or in the room and ſtead of the ſinner ; that God the Father might juſtify him conſiſtent with his whole character.—The work of the Holy Spirit is carried on *in* the ſinner, in order to reconcile him to God, and fit him for eternal life. Jeſus Chriſt opens the way for his diſcharge from

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the curſe of the law; the Spirit of God makes him meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Both are abſolutely neceſſary; the latter no leſs than the former, becauſe, "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord." [Heb. xii. 14.]

It hath been proved already in a preceding part of the ſubject, that mankind are in a condition of total depravity: if ſo, their final condemnation is certain unleſs the heart be changed; becauſe a mind at enmity againſt God, can not be happy in his preſence.

It may, perhaps, be ſaid, That thoſe perſons only who are abandoned to wickedneſs are thus depraved; but this is not the caſe with all mankind.—It is confeſſed, that all men do not diſcover their depravity by open wickedneſs. Many perſons are under the reſtraint of education, ſenſe of honor, or a fear of the wrath to come; whoſe hearts at the ſame time remain diſaffected to divine things.—Let ſuch perſons aſk themſelves as in the preſence of that God who looks through them, and knows every thought afar off, whether

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they do not reſtrain prayer before him ?—Prefer a croud of fabulous publications to the ſacred volume ?—Whether they are not ſtrangers to the duties of private religion ?—Is not God in great meaſure forgotten by them ?—Do they not lie down and riſe up, without any proper ſenſe of him who holdeth their ſouls in life ?—Are not their hearts wholly attached to the riches, honors and pleaſures of the world ?—Will not a ſmall difficulty detain them from the place of public worſhip ?—Would the like difficulty prevent their going to an evening's amuſement ? Why not ?—The reaſon is obvious ; they hate the one and love the other. If a preacher happens to exceed his uſual length in preaching, are they not quite out of patience with him ; though they allow the ſermon was good, and his manner not diſagreeable ?—Yet would not theſe very perſons be willing to remain until midnight at ſome faſhionable entertainment ?—Are they not fatigued with the one, and in raptures with the other ? I aſk theſe queſtions, my friends, that you may determine what your prevailing taſte is. You certainly know what you love moſt : If the world

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and the things thereof have the preference, can you believe that you ſhall be happy in Heaven, where all is holy ? Be not deceived ; for however amiable you may appear in the eyes of the world, one thing is wanting : your hearts muſt be changed by a divine influence, or you are undone forever.

It is a clear caſe with me, That ſhould God leave the ſinner to himſelf, and not inflict on him any *poſitive* puniſhment at all, the depravity of his own heart would make him entirely miſerable, becauſe the very nature of ſin ſeparates the ſoul from God. [Iſa. lix. 2.] It follows then, " Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God." [John iii. 3.] In the 5th ver. of the ſame chapter this change is repreſented as a being born of the Spirit ; becauſe he effects it. Sometimes it is called a tranſlation, a paſſing from death to life :—But in 2 Cor. v. 17, we have this ſtriking paſſage—" If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature : old things paſs away ; behold, all things become new." His views, his joys, his company, his conduct are all new.—— His heart is broken for ſin as committed a-

gainſt God; he lothes himſelf and repents in duſt and aſhes.—The divine character appears glorious to him—Chriſt is precious—ſins of heart his conſtant burden—holineſs the thing he longs for.—He feelingly adopts the language of David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I deſire beſide thee." The greateſt pleaſure he has, is in communion with God.

His conduct is changed alſo: for having believed in God, he is careful to maintain good works.—His religion begins in his heart, and extends its influence over all his behavior; ſo that his acquaintance take knowledge of him, that he hath been with Jeſus.

Thus the Holy Ghoſt accompanies the diſpenſation of the goſpel with the exceeding greatneſs of his power, and enlarges the Redeemer's kingdom. And thus will he continue to do, until all the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return and come to Sion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads: then ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.

7th. The preceding obſervations relative to the deity and incarnation of Chriſt, the doctrine of the atonement, and the influence of the Spirit of God in the regeneration of the ſinner, naturally lead me to remark, That the doctrine of the Trinity appears to me to be ſo interwoven with chriſtianity in general, and the plan of apoſtolic preaching in particular, as to make an eſſential part of it. The Father is repreſented as *chooſing*—the Son as *redeeming*—and the Holy Ghoſt as *calling* and *ſanctifying*. [Ephſ. i. 4.] "According as he, the Father, hath *choſen* us in him."—Of the Son it is ſaid [Titus ii. 14.] "who gave himſelf for us, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity." And in Titus iii. 5. the apoſtle aſſures us, that we are "ſaved by the waſhing of regeneration, and *renewing* of the Holy Ghoſt." Thus different parts of the work of ſalvation are attributed to different perſons in the Godhead.

Before Jeſus Chriſt left the world he gave the following commiſſion to his apoſtles, and to their ſucceſſors in the miniſtry;—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; baptiſing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of

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the HOLY GHOST :"—[Matt. xxviii. 19.]—Here we obſerve in an act of religious worſhip, equal honor paid to each perſon in the Godhead.

ACCORDING to this commiſſion the apoſtles and primitive preachers acted. They could not do otherwiſe without being diſobedient to the command of Chriſt ; conſequently, wherever they preached the goſpel and baptized the converts to Chriſtianity, they maintained the doctrine of the Trinity. Nor does it appear, that they had any apprehenſions that it would prevent the ſucceſs of their miſſion. They knew it to be their duty, to pay a prompt and implicit obedience to their maſter's orders, and to leave all conſequences as to themſelves, and his cauſe with him ; being fully perſuaded that he would never command them to believe, or propagate any ſentiment that was not perfectly reaſonable, though they could not fully comprehend it. Nor do we find that they ever made a ſingle attempt to explain, how it is that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt are three perſons yet one God ; nor how the divine and human natures were united in Jeſus Chriſt. They maintained

tained this threefold diſtinction in the Godhead; and aſſure us, that "God was manifeſt in the fleſh;" but confeſſed the myſtery, and ſubmited their reaſon to divine revelation; in which God's "deſign is to make known *realities* and *facts*, not the *manner* of them.

"ALMOST every thing in the ſyſtem of nature, notwithſtanding the great improvements in modern philoſophy, is attended with difficulties. If you look up to the heavens, you ſtand aſtoniſhed at their greatneſs, and feel yourſelf incapable of comprehending that immenſity which lies beyond thoſe vaſt ſpaces which ſurround us. If you caſt your eyes on the earth, you meet with as many myſteries as there are animals, plants, and creatures inanimate. You meet with innumerable difficulties in explaining, the ſenſation of one, the vegetation of another, and the motion of a third.—If you conſider material nature in its wide extremes, of immenſe greatneſs, and inviſible minuteneſs, you are ſtruck with amazement and imagination is nonpluſſed.—If, to the conſideration of bodies, you take in that of their duration, time will ſhew you incompre-

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ſenſible wonders; both in the ſucceſſion of ages paſt, and in that which is future.—If you turn your thoughts to ſpiritual eſſences, every thing ſurpaſſes your comprehenſion. You cannot comprehend, either their manner of exiſting, or their manner of acting. Even the human ſoul is ſo great a paradox to itſelf, that it long ſince deſpaired, not only of comprehending, but of knowing itſelf.

"And if ſo, is there any reaſon to aſſert, as our adverſaries do, that there are *no myſteries* in religion? Or have they ſufficient ground to refuſe their aſſent to our Lord's eternal Divinity? ſo clearly revealed in the Bible, becauſe it is attended with ſuch difficulties as are inſuperable to the powers of reaſon? Is it any wonder if the difficulties with which we meet in the Chriſtian religion, and eſpecially thoſe that regard the Deity of Chriſt and the doctrine of the Trinity, ſhould be found greater, much greater, than thoſe which attend a philoſophical inquiry into the ſyſtem of nature? It would, indeed be a wonder if it were not ſo; becauſe the conſtitution and capacities of our minds bear ſome pro-

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portion to natural objects, which are created and finite; and are much better qualified to inquire into their cauſes and properties, their connections and uſes, than into thoſe of religion, which are of a ſpiritual kind, and particularly what relates to the *infinite Godhead.*" *

THIS threefold diſtinction in the Godhead is mentioned by Paul [2. Cor. xiii. 14.] "The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all, Amen." This is evidently a prayer of the apoſtle addreſſed to the ſacred Three, that all ſpiritual bleſſings might be granted to his chriſtian friends at Corinth: He could bleſs them in no another ſenſe than by praying for them.

To what has been ſaid, I ſhall only add, 1 John v. 7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are one." †

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* Dr. ABBADIE on the deity of Chriſt, p. 326, 327.

† Thoſe perſons who wiſh to ſee the authenticity of this text excellently vindicated, are adviſed to read TRAVIS's letters to Dr. GIBBON.

"I FREELY grant, ſays an excellent writer, that had I conſulted my own reaſon only, I could not have diſcovered ſome myſteries of the goſpel. Nevertheleſs, when I think on the grandeur of God; when I caſt my eyes on that vaſt ocean; when I conſider that immenſe ALL; nothing aſtoniſhes me, nothing ſtumbles me, nothing ſeems to be inadmiſſible, however incomprehenſible ſoever it may be. When the ſubject is Divine, I am ready to believe all, to admit all, to receive all; provided I be convinced that it is God himſelf who ſpeaks to me, or any one on his part. After this I am no more aſtoniſhed that there are three diſtinct perſons in one divine eſſence; one God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghoſt.—Either religion muſt tell us nothing about God, or what it tells us muſt be beyond our capacities; and in diſcovering even the borders of this immenſe ocean, it muſt needs exhibit a vaſt extent in which our feeble eyes are loſt. But what ſurprizes me, what ſtumbles me, what frightens me, is to ſee a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the ſupreme Being;

Being; oppoſe that intelligence who ſitteth at the helm of the world; queſtion what he affirms, diſpute what he determines, appeal from his deciſions, and, even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are beyond his capacity! Enter into thy nothingneſs, mortal creature! What madneſs animates thee! How durſt thou pretend—thou who art but a point, thou whoſe eſſence is but an atom—to meaſure thyſelf with the Supreme Being; with him who fills heaven and earth; with Him, whom *heaven, the heaven of heavens cannot contain! Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection? High as heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than hell, what canſt thou know?*"*

* Mr. SAURIN's Ser. Vol. 1. p. 78, 79, ROBINSON's tranſlation.

SERMON III.

8th. I PASS to obſerve, That the apoſtles plainly and repeatedly preached the doctrine of *divine ſovereignty*: Or, that God has an abſolute right to diſpoſe of all things, according to his own pleaſure.

It has often been objected to this truth, That it repreſents Almighty God partial to his creatures, by making a diſtinction among them.—But this ought not to be an objection, becauſe it is a fact, known and read of all men, that he hath placed ſome in a far more eligible ſituation than others. In creation we obſerve the moſt palpable diſtinction among the creatures of God.

ANGELS are first in the order of created intelligences; are said to excel in strength, continually surround the throne of God, and are employed in the most exalted and important services. They are dignified in nature and office.

MEN form the next link in the chain of intelligent agents; whom Deity hath created with a nature less dignified, endued with inferior mental powers, and employed in a manner less noble and interesting. Among mankind there is also a very obvious distinction. One man is extremely handsome; another, extremely homely: One has all his parts; another is deformed, maimed, blind, halt.

THEY differ in mind likewise no less than in body. One person has great sagacity and penetration; another is an idiot, or but a small remove from him. All minds, though formed by the same Almighty hand, are not of the same dimensions. God himself hath made this difference.

They differ in place or ſtation in life. They are not fitted for, nor employed with equal dignity. All are uſeful in their place, but not equally ſo.

This being the caſe, I aſk, Will any man dare to cenſure Jehovah for making ſuch diſtinctions among his creatures? "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel to honor, and another to diſhonor?"—Shall the idiot, or the man of ſmall powers of mind ſay to his Creator, Why was I not made equal to Sir Iſaac Newton?—Or ſhall that great philoſopher ſay to his Maker, Why was not I created an angel? We tremble at the idea of thus arraigning the divine conduct. God hath done what he had a right to do; and hath exerciſed that right under the influence of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs.

We obſerve that the like diſtinction runs thro' God's whole *œconomy of providence*. Some perſons have all and abound; others are depreſſed with poverty.—Two men ſhall ſet out in life with equal proſpects and advantages; one of them

them ſhall be ſucceſsful in almoſt every thing he undertakes; the other ſhall meet with repeated loſſes, and become poor.

Some perſons enjoy a conſtant and confirmed ſtate of health; others are always ſick, knowing ſcarce one day in which they are free from pain; though equally virtuous and temperate.—One paſſes through the moſt eminent dangers, and eſcapes uninjured; another loſes his life by the moſt trifling occurrence.—One lives to a good old age; another is cut down from the birth.—One continues till he becomes a burden to himſelf and friends; another in the bloom and vigor of his days, is arreſted by the laſt enemy.

The Deity hath made a difference among mankind with reſpect to the means of knowledge. Some people remain in the ſavage ſtate; while others, favored with every advantage of information, both divine and human, have arrived at a ſurprizing height of knowledge and refinement. Yet they all belong to the ſame great family, and are under the government of the ſame infinite God, who for wiſe reaſons, makes

theſe diſtinctions among them. He could eaſily have placed all men in circumſtances equally agreeable, had it been his will: or have made an entire reverſe of condition. He might have ordered your ſoul or mine to have animated the body of a Laplander, a Hottentot, or an American ſavage; but he hath been pleaſed, as a ſovereign God, to place us in a more pleaſing condition.

THESE are ſome of the diſtinctions which God hath made in the courſe of his moral government: And who ſhall ſay unto him, What doeſt thou?

THE ſovereignty of God is equally apparent in his conduct towards *ſinners*. He hath paſſed by the fallen angels. "And the angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day." [Jude vi.] Their nature the Son of God did not aſſume, becauſe their ſalvation was not the end he deſigned to accompliſh: Accordingly we are told, that hell is "prepared for the devil and his angels." [Matt. xxv. 41.] Whence it appears that they are paſſed by.

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God hath made a very important difference among mankind, by ſending the goſpel to ſome of them, and withholding it from others. Thoſe perſons who are diſpoſed to raiſe objections either againſt the benevolence of the Deity, or the truth of divine revelation on this account, would do well to conſider, That God himſelf hath made this diſtinction, and that he can do no wrong. He is a rock, his way is perfect: nor doth he give account of his matters to any.

Besides, it is evident that there is a ſtriking analogy in all his conduct in creation, providence and redemption.—He hath not in either caſe diſtributed his bleſſings on all men alike. This hath been proved already in the preceding obſervations. If it is neceſſary therefore to vindicate his conduct in this inſtance, it is no leſs neceſſary in the others. "But who art thou O man, that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?"

Among thoſe perſons who are favored with the goſpel, there is alſo a difference. He takes

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one of a city, and two of a family and brings them to Sion. "For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," [Rom. ix. 15, 16, 18.] not by poſitive influence, but by leaving the ſinner to act out his own character, or follow the wickedneſs of his own heart.—And as mankind univerſally have by ſin ſubjected themſelves to everlaſting condemnation, they that are loſt will have no juſt cauſe of complaint againſt God; but will be obliged to acknowledge his juſtice; and they who are ſaved, will aſcribe their ſalvation wholly to his ſovereign grace. God condemns none but the guilty; nor will he ſave any that had any claim on him; otherwiſe ſalvation would not be by grace.

In the chapter in which the text is, this diſtinction is moſt clearly declared. The ſame goſpel that was the wiſdom and power of God

to ſome, was a ſtumbling-block and fooliſhneſs to others: hence Paul thus addreſſed himſelf to the Corinthians; "For ye ſee your calling brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no fleſh might glory in his preſence." [1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28, 29.] Remark, my brethren, God is here ſaid to chooſe ſome and to leave others. Some perſons were brought to receive the goſpel, while others were left in their unbelief.

PAUL always aſcribes his converſion to the *grace* of God. "When it pleaſed God who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace"—In another place he ſays, "By the grace of God I am what I am."—If ſo, it follows as an undeniable truth, ThatGod made a difference between him, and many of his countrymen

trymen the Jews. He was converted to chriſtianity by divine power, while crowds of other ſinners were paſſed by. God could as eaſily have converted the whole nation as one man, had it been his ſovereign pleaſure: but you all know he did not; therefore he made a difference.

We ſee in our own day when the Lord revives his work among us, that one is taken and another left. The ſame ſermon that is the means of awakening or comforting one perſon, leaves others in a ſecure condition. Under the ſame religious advantages ſome are hopely wrought upon, while others maintain their oppoſition to Jeſus Chriſt.

That the ſucceſs of the goſpel, or the converſion of ſinners is owing to divine influence, is proved by the current language of ſcripture. They who believe in Chriſt, are ſaid to be "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but *of God.*" [John i. 12, 13.] Paul ſays, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but *God gave the increaſe.*" [1 Cor. iii. 6.]—We may ſafely conclude then, that under the diſpenſation

ſation of the goſpel, God confers a favor on ſome, that he does not confer on all.

Our bleſſed Lord teaches us this doctrine of divine ſovereignty in the following paſſage, as well as in others that might be mentioned. [Luke x. 21.] "In that hour Jeſus rejoiced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes; even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight."

9th. The *nature* and *neceſſity* of *faith* and *repentance* were important parts of the preaching of the apoſtles. They aſſure us, that "faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen."—"The belief of the truth," or, a giving credit to the record God gave of his Son. And that we may be capable of diſtinguiſhing between living and dead faith, they inform us, that the faith of God's elect, works by love, purifies the heart, eſteems Chriſt precious, and produces good works: "Faith without works is dead being alone."

The

THE importance of faith appears from various circumſtances, ſuch as, That without it we cannot pleaſe God—enjoy the conſolations of the goſpel, nor enter into the kingdom of heaven. "If ye believe not that I am he, ſaid Chriſt to the Jews, ye ſhall die in your ſins;" [John viii. 24.] that is, under the curſe of the law, and periſh for ever. The language of the commiſſion needs no comment; "He that believeth ſhall be ſaved; and he that believeth not ſhall be damned." According to this commiſſion, the apoſtles conſtantly urged on ſinners the neceſſity of believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whom God had ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

THEY alſo inſiſted, wherever they went, on the nature and neceſſity of repentance, as implying a change in the diſpoſition of the mind, without which no man can ſee the Lord. Peter ſaid to the anxious multitude, [Acts ii. 37, 38,] "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the remiſſion of ſins." And Paul aſſured the Athenians, that "God commanded all men every where to repent, becauſe

cauſe he had appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteouſneſs," &c.—[Acts xvii. 31.]

THE moſt likely method of bringing mankind to repentance, is to hold up to their view the nature, extent, and perpetuity of the divine law, as holy, juſt and good;——reaching to the thoughts and intents of the heart—requiring truth in the inward parts, and condemning the ſinner for a ſingle inordinate deſire, or wrong temper: which law is perpetually, and univerſally binding. Until heaven and earth paſs away, Chriſt aſſures us, one jot or tittle of the law ſhall not fail.—Now by this law is the knowledge of ſin; and when it comes home in its true nature on the conſcience, ſin revives and the ſinner dies, i. e. he ſtands juſtly condemned by it as a tranſgreſſor, but ſees no way of eſcape. In this condition he remains till Chriſt is revealed in him: For the law can do nothing but condemn him. It will not accept repentance as a condition of his pardon; nor can it diſcover the atonement. Its language is, "Pay me what thou oweſt." At length the ſinner is brought

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to look on him whom he hath pierced, and to mourn for him as one mourneth for his only ſon, and to be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt born. He adopts the language of the prophet, ſaying, "Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh: I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth." [Jer. xxxi. 19.]

10th. The apoſtles dwelt much on the *chriſtian tempers*, and the whole circle of *moral* and *evangelical obedience*; ſuch as, ſupreme love to God—benevolence to men—meekneſs, patience—reſignation to the divine will,—forgiveneſs of injuries,—readineſs to relieve the poor, &c. Jeſus Chriſt had taught them theſe important leſſons in his moſt excellent ſermon on the mount, [Matt. 5, 6 and 7 chapters] which contains an immenſe treaſure of moſt precious truths and exhortations: after which they copied in their own preaching. Hence they thus addreſs us, "If any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his."—"They that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh with its affections and luſts."—

"Let

"Let the ſame mind be in you that was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus."—"If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live."—— Theſe are mentioned as a ſpecimen of their zeal, to promote perſonal holineſs among the diſciples of Chriſt.

They alſo perſuaded believers to give themſelves up to the Lord and to his church, by a public ſubmiſſion to the two leading inſtitutions of the new teſtament, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper; that they might become witneſſes for Chriſt, and enjoy the ſpecial privileges of his houſe.—In a word, They urged with conſtancy and zeal the great importance of good works, as evidences and fruits of faith; and that others ſeeing them, might be excited to glorify their Father who is in heaven.

11th. They often brought into view the reſurrection of the dead, the laſt judgment, and the final ſtates of men. On the firſt of theſe Paul enlarges with great ſtrength and propriety of reaſoning in 1 Cor. xv; to which I refer you.

They

They alſo aſſure us in language calculated to awaken all our attention, That Jeſus Chriſt will deſcend from heaven with a ſhout; the voice of the arch-angel, and the trump of God: That the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth and all that is therein ſhall be burnt up. Then they who have done good ſhall come forth to the reſurrection of life; and they who have done evil to the reſurrection of damnation. O, how ſolemn will be this concluding ſcene! The laſt trump will awake the ſleeping millions.—The ſea give up the dead that are in it:—death and hell give up the dead that are in them—and all crowd around that throne on which the Judge is ſeated, from whoſe ſentence there will be no appeal!—Amazement all!——

The different characters of men are marked—all carry their deſtination in their countenances.—The righteous fly to meet their glorious Judge, their Savior and their Friend, and bid him welcome ten thouſand times.—Their hearts beat high with joy and praiſe—Each eye beams peace, and all the innumerable multitude of re-

deemed ſinners ſing, "Lo this is our God, we have waited for him; we will rejoice and be glad in his ſalvation."—Theſe he ſhall place on his right hand.

But the ungodly approach with horror and deſpair: for their conſciences at this fatal moment more than ever, anticipate their doom; hence they "ſay to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?" [Rev. vi. 16,17.] —Theſe the Judge ſhall place on his left hand.—The critical and deciſive moment is arrived—all nations are before him: they are ſeparated the one from the other as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats.—To them on his right hand he will ſay, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.——Then ſhall he ſay alſo

unto

unto them on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not.——And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal." [Matt xxv. 31—end.]——Thus the ſolemn ſcene is cloſed—"They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the *door was ſhut.*"

"ETERNITY, the various ſentence paſt,
Aſſigns the ſever'd throng diſtinct abodes,
Sulphureous, or ambroſial; What enſues?
The deed predominant! the deed of deeds!
Which makes a hell of hell, a heav'n of heav'n.
The Goddeſs, with determin'd aſpect turns
Her adamantine key's enormous ſize
Through deſtiny's inextricable wards,
Deep-driving ev'ry bolt, on both their fates.
Then, from the chryſtal battlements of heav'n,
Down, down, ſhe hurls it thro' the dark profound
Ten thouſand thouſand fathom; there to ruſt,
And ne'er unlock her reſolution more."*

III. I PASS

* Dr. YOUNG's Night Thoughts, p. 22, 221.

III. I PASS to ſhew, That God hath put the moſt diſtinguiſhed honor on theſe doctrines, by making them the means of ſaving them who believe.

THEY were not only remarkably ſucceſsful during the firſt age of the church, when thouſands were converted to the chriſtian faith, [See Acts ii. 41.—iv. 4, &c.] but have been ſo at different periods ſince down to the preſent day.

"BEFORE the deſtruction of Jeruſalem the goſpel was not only preached in the leſs Aſia, and Greece and Italy, the great theatres of action then in the world; but was likewiſe propagated as far northward as Scythia, as far ſouthward as Ethiopia, as far eaſtward as Parthia and India, as far weſtward as Spain and Britain." *

DURING the three firſt centuries, the goſpel was preached with great ſucceſs, notwithſtanding the violence of perſecution. The more the chriſtians were oppreſſed the more they grew; hence it became a maxim, That "the blood of the martyrs is the ſeed of the church."

FROM

* Bp. NEWTON on the Propheſies, Vol. II. p. 237.

FROM the time of the death of Conſtantine till the reformation from popery, the church paſſed through various dark and trying ſcenes. Sometimes ſhe appeared to be near deſtruction. "This is the darkeſt and moſt diſmal day that ever the church ſaw, and probably the darkeſt it ever will ſee." Yet through all that period God raiſed up ſome faithful witneſſes for his cauſe: among whom, by general conſent of eccleſiaſtical writers, we are to place the Waldenſes,* who are ſaid by ſome authors, to have preſerved and handed down the apoſtolic doctrines pure, from primitive times to the days of Luther.†

REINERUS their violent enemy tells us, "That of all ſects that ever were, none were ſo pernicious to the church of Rome as the Leoniſts or Waldenſes; and that for theſe reaſons: 1. For their *antiquity* and long continuance, even from the time of pope Sylveſter, who was made Pope in

* For a full account of theſe pious people, ſee MOSHEIM's Eccleſ. Hiſtory.

† The confeſſion of their faith ſhews their attachment to the apoſtolic doctrines.

in the year 316; or, as others have affirmed, from the time of the apoſtles. 2. For the *univerſality* of that ſect, becauſe there was ſcarce any country where they were not. 3. When all other heretics, by reaſon of their blaſphemy againſt God, were abhorred, the Waldenſes had a great appearance of piety, becauſe they lived juſtly before men, believed all things well of God, and had the articles of the creed, only they blaſphemed the church and clergy of Rome." *

AFTER this long night of error and perſecution, during which period, the witneſſes were few, and were obliged to prophecy in ſackcloth, the reformation took place. Wickcliff appeared in England, whoſe diſciples became numerous—Luther and Melancthon in Germany—John Huſs and Jerome in Bohemia—Zuinglius and others in Switzerland. It would be almoſt endleſs to mention the names of the worthy men in different parts of the world, whom God raiſed up to befriend the truths of the goſpel: many of whom ſealed them with their blood.

IF

* GILLES ſucceſs of the goſpel, Vol. I. p. 39.

If we conſult the hiſtory of the church ſince the reformation, we ſhall find that God hath ſet his ſeal to the apoſtolic doctrines in different parts of the world, by making them the means of great reformations among mankind. InEngland, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, America, &c. there have been remarkable revivals of religion; at which times crowds of ſinners have been turned from darkneſs to light. Whole towns and villages have become ſerious and reformed—— places of public worſhip, at ſuch ſeaſons, were crowded with anxious enquirers; and converts have come like the clouds and the doves to their windows. *

It is readily granted, That the great end of the preaching of the goſpel, is to make mankind wiſer and better. When therefore the wicked are reformed, churches filled with members who adorn their profeſſion; and the youth eſpecially are made willing to become the followers of the Lamb of God, at a period of life, when they are moſt capable of enjoying the pleaſures of ſenſe, we may ſafely call this *the work of God.*

And

* Chriſtian Hiſtory.

And bleſſed be his name, ſuch have been the effects of the faithful miniſtry among all denominations of chriſtians, who have maintained the apoſtolic doctrines. You muſt be ſenſible, my brethren, if you have been obſervant, that thoſe men have been the moſt ſucceſsful, who have been moſt engaged in preaching the humbling doctrines of the croſs. God hath put diſtinguiſhed honor on them, by giving them many ſeals to their miniſtry, as their joy and crown.

WHENCE we infer,

1. THAT the miniſters of the goſpel have the greateſt encouragement, to preach the ſame doctrines in every age of the world.

THOSE perſons are quite miſtaken who think, that the goſpel can be rendered agreable to natural men as ſuch: they may be changed into the ſpirit of it by the power of God, but the goſpel remains the ſame. Or the preachers of it may leave out, or explain away its moſt exceptionable parts, and thereby obtain the character of *rational* and *moderate* men: but let it be remembered in that caſe, it is no longer Paul's goſpel, or chriſtianity as taught by Chriſt and

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his apoſtles they preach; rather ſomething quite different from it; by which they may *amuſe* mankind, but they have no juſt reaſon to believe it will be the means of their converſion.

The nearer we come in preaching to the ſentiments and manner of the apoſtles, I humbly conceive, the greater reaſon we have to expect ſucceſs. The *ſentiments* have been conſidered; of the *manner* I beg leave to ſay—They preached *plainly*, that all who heard them might underſtand them; and *faithfully*, that God, their own conſciences, or the people might not reproach them. They did not ſhun to declare the whole counſel of God; nor uſe ambiguous expreſſions, to prevent its being known what their real ſentiments were; but took a ſide like faithful men; nor feared any conſequences, while engaged in, what they believed to be, the cauſe of God and truth.

Every man has an undoubted right to think for himſelf, and to publiſh his principles to the world: and in this enlightened and liberal age he has nothing to fear as to his perſon. And though his ſentiments may be oppoſed, his fidelity will entitle him to reſpect from mankind; who continue to revere an honeſt man.

THE apoſtles were alſo *diligent* in the work of the Lord: were inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon. "I have taught you publicly, ſays Paul, and from houſe to houſe." Their hearts glowed with love to God, and to the ſouls of men; hence they were willing to ſpend and to be ſpent in the ſacred ſervice. In public and private life they were examples to the flock.

THEY preached with a *pathos* that aroſe out of the infinite importance of the ſubjects of their miniſtry; which had a natural tendency to fix the attention of their hearers, and to convince them that they were in earneſt.—They felt their ſubjects, and they made others feel. Felix, a Roman governor, trembled before Paul his priſoner, while he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come.—King Agrippa was forced to acknowledge, that Paul had almoſt perſuaded him to be a chriſtian.

2. WHAT has been ſaid, ſuggeſts to them who have been long in the miniſtry, and have had but little ſucceſs, the ſerious enquiry, Whether they have plainly and faithfully preached the apoſtolic doctrines?

doctrines ? Or, whether they have not been aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt ?—If the latter has been the caſe, no wonder they have dragged on heavily in the work ; and with very few, if any, ſeals to their miniſtry : for God will reprove ſuch unfaithfulneſs in his ſervice.

TRUE indeed, it ſometimes happens, that the *faithful* miniſters of the goſpel are for a ſeaſon unſucceſsful ; yet they ought not to be diſcouraged, for in due time they ſhall reap if they faint not. They who go forth weeping bearing precious ſeed, ſhall finally return rejoicing, bringing their ſheaves with them.—But ſuppoſe they ſhould not ſee the fruit of their labors in this life, they will have the teſtimony of conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, they have had their converſation in the world.—Let them who ſow, ſow in hope :—The word ſhall not return void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which God pleaſeth, and proſper in the thing whereto he ſent it.

3. SHOULD theſe diſcourſes fall into the hands of any young men, who wiſh to engage in the work

work of the miniſtry, they will excuſe me if I ſay, They ought *firſt* to aſk themſelves, Whether they have ever felt the transforming power of the goſpel on their hearts. Miniſters of Chriſt ought certainly to know the truth by a happy experience, or they will be blind leaders of the blind. "A preacher's firſt and ſupreme quality, that which muſt give life and vigour to his compoſitions, and juſt ſcope to all his talents, lies in his being a good man, I mean a lover of God, and a friend of men. A preacher who has not felt the power, and imbibed the ſpirit of chriſtianity, is the moſt unfit perſon in the world, to teach and recommend it to others." *

In ſuch a condition he will find it a very hard ſervice, to be always engaged in praying, ſtudying, preaching, anſwering caſes of conſcience, viſiting the ſick and dying, &c. becauſe, whatever he may be in appearance, his heart is unfriendly to the work. If on the other hand, he has felt the goſpel coming with power, the Holy Ghoſt, and much aſſurance, he will love it, becauſe

* Fordyce's Art of preaching, p. 100.

becauſe it tends to advance the glory of God, and the ſalvation of ſinners. Having been made happy by the goſpel himſelf, he longs that others ſhould taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious. With ſuch a temper it becomes his meat and drink, to be daily engaged in the various parts of miniſterial duty.—He puts on no forbidding airs,—is eaſy of acceſs; and by his benevolence, affability and piety, invites the diſtreſſed of every deſcription, to enter into the freeſt converſation with him: and enjoys a moſt ſenſible pleaſure, when he is the means of leſſening the diſtreſſes of mankind, whether of ſoul or body.

4. In fine: We infer, That while the miniſters of the goſpel are obliged to maintain all the parts of the ſacred ſyſtem, ſo far as they underſtand them, they ought to inſiſt moſt of all on thoſe, that are immediately calculated to promote the greateſt good of mankind:—Such for inſtance, as tend to awaken the ſtupid conſcience—direct the anxious ſinner to Chriſt—and edify and build up believers in their moſt holy faith: i. e. To enlighten and reform the world.

THE poſitive inſtitutions of religion are *ſecondary* objects; and though good in their place, ought by no means to be ſet in competition with the fundamental doctrines of the goſpel, and the various chriſtian tempers.

A PIOUS man of a liberal mind is anxious moſt of all that ſinners ſhould be converted to Jeſus Chriſt. This end accompliſhed he feels happy; and is willing that every man ſhould be fully perſuaded in his own mind, with reſpect to what are called, the *circumſtantials* of religion.—He can truly ſay, "Send Lord by whom thou wilt ſend."—If the Redeemer's kingdom is advanced in the world, he rejoiceth let who will be the inſtruments of it; or, let it be among what denomination of chriſtians it may.

IT is to be lamented, my brethren, that thoſe chriſtians who are united in the moſt eſſential truths of the goſpel, ſhould contend ſo much as they do about rites and ceremonies. Such conduct tends to create animoſities, ſeparate friends, and is very injurious to the general intereſts of religion. It looks as if we were

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more engaged to convert ſinners to our party, than to Jeſus Chriſt. Let us walk together as far as we can agree; and when we are brought to a ſtop by different opinions or practices, let us agree to differ; and by no means fall out by the way.—We are embarked in a common and glorious cauſe; let us then contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints.—Iniquity abounds, the love of many waxeth cold, and falſe doctrines of extraordinary magnitude prevail.——Let us then ſtand [illegible] the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free.

"Now unto Him who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN."

ERRATA.

The whole marginal note in the 6th and 7th pages, ſhould have been marked for a quotation.

Page 7. line 7, from the bottom—for "*natural*" read *unnatural*.